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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003722

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PACOM FOR FPA HUSO

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SUBJECT: SECRETARY RUMSFELD'S MEETING WITH THAI MINISTER
FOR DEFENSE THAMARAK

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. Reason 1.4 (a and d)

[11.](#) (C) Summary. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld met with Thai Defense Minister Thamarak Isarangura Na Ayutthaya on June 6 in Bangkok. SecDef said: 1) the strong history of U.S.-Thai military cooperation facilitated the impressive response to the December 26 tsunami; 2) the U.S. hopes that Thailand will endorse the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Statement of Principles soon; 3) he hopes Thailand will be able to make a humanitarian contribution to OIF; 4) selecting the F-16 would contribute to Thailand's modernization; and, 5) maritime security in the Malacca Strait is important. Minister Thamarak 1) suggested that the violence in Southern Thailand is an internal matter; 2) said that Thailand is considering both the PSI Statement of Principles and a contribution to Ira; and, 3) indicated that the F-16 decision will be decided by the Thai Cabinet but that the military understood the benefits of the F-16 as a result of their years of training with the United States. End Summary.

[12.](#) (C) Tsunami Cooperation. Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Thamarak agreed that our joint ability to use Utapao Thai Naval Air Base as the hub for tsunami relief efforts was due to decades of bilateral military cooperation. Secretary Rumsfeld made special mention of our long-standing bilateral exercise program and the large number of Thai officers who have studied in the United States.

[13.](#) (C) PSI. Secretary Rumsfeld urged Thailand to join the more than 60 countries that have already endorsed the PSI Statement of Principles. Thamarak said that the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the lead on the issue and that endorsement is being discussed by the Cabinet. Thamarak suggested that Thailand would eventually endorse PSI.

[14.](#) (C) Maritime Security and the Malacca Strait. Secretary Rumsfeld briefed Thamarak on his recent discussions with Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore about maritime security in the Malacca Strait. Secretary Rumsfeld mentioned Singapore Defense Minister Teo Chee Hean's three principles to govern maritime security in the Strait: 1) littoral states have the primary role; 2) user states have an interest and a role to play; and, 3) every action should be carried out in accordance with international law and national sovereignty. Thamarak acknowledged the growing sophistication of pirates in the Malacca Strait. He said that Malaysian Defense Minister Najib had recently told him about U.S. offers to provide technical assistance by helping to set up a counterterrorism center in Malaysia. Thamarak welcomed such a center, saying it could benefit Thailand by providing data and improving cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia.

[15.](#) (C) OIF. Noting Thailand's early support for OIF and recent indications that Thailand is considering a future "humanitarian" deployment to Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld asked when Thailand plans to answer CJCS General Myers' March 2005 letter asking for further assistance in Iraq. Thamarak said that the Thai Cabinet is discussing this matter and noted that Thailand's previous dispatch of medical personnel to Iraq had been well received by the Iraqi people.

[16.](#) (C) F-16. Stressing the importance of interoperability, Secretary Rumsfeld mentioned Thailand's ongoing new fighter

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aircraft contract competition and urged Thailand to support Lockheed Martin's bid to provide F-16 Block 52's to the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF). Thamarak explained that, for the first time since the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the MOD had funds for new equipment. Without indicating what procurement decision would likely be made, Thamarak did note the familiarity RTAF officers have with F-16 due to years of working with the United States.

[17.](#) (C) Southern Thailand. Thamarak explained that countering separatist unrest in southern Thailand is his Government's top priority. He shared his suspicion that some "outside terrorist groups" might be assisting Thai Muslim radicals but stressed that, thus far, Thai intelligence has

no direct indication of outside involvement. Thamarak emphasized that the situation in the south is an internal Thai matter to be solved by the Thai themselves.

18. (U) SecDef has not reviewed this cable. Released by ASD Rodman.
BOYCE